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ABSTRACT
                This paper discusses three forms of community connections:
service learning, partnerships, and public service, and offers an overview of
the current service-learning movement in community colleges. It argues that,
in order for community colleges to fulfill their missions, they must embrace
the full implication of the having "community" in their name by reaching out
in as many ways as possible. Service learning can be seen as a way to get
students more actively involved in the learning process while broadening
their awareness of the world around them and their roles in it. As students
become more engaged in the learning process, they retain more, moving from
retaining 10% of what they read to retaining 95% of what they teach, 75% of
what they discuss with others, and 80% of personal experience. Students who
find a way to connect their academic work to their personal lives are the
happiest students on campus and tend to be the most successful in the
classroom. This paper argues that service learning is a more formalized
method of ensuring that students have the opportunity to make those
connections. The article gives a summary of a number of model programs in
community colleges across the country. (Contains 29 references.) (NB)

CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY:
SERVICE LEARNING, PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Introduction

Henry G. Cisneros, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, begins a 1996

essay with these words: "In the search for solutions to persistent problems of poverty and

corrosive joblessness in our urban centers, the potential of urban community colleges as agents

of social transformation and catalysts for economic revitalization has not yet been fully explored"

(Cisneros, 1996).

The typical mission of community colleges, urban, rural, or suburban, makes them the

appropriate vehicle to provide this type of assistance to every community. Community colleges

are the segment of higher education that usually provides basic skills to older individuals who

dropped out of K-12, vocational entry level skills, lower division academic instruction, and re-

training for persons in need of upgrading their job skills. Additionally, they are institutions that

serve minority and under-prepared students. To fulfill their missions, community colleges must

embrace the full implication of having "community" in their name and reach out in as many ways

as possible. The Commission on the Future of Community Colleges has stated that community

should be defined "not only as a region to be served, but also as a climate to be created" (The

Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988).

There are several reasons why it is more difficult for community colleges to build this

type relationship than it is for four-year institutions. Mittelstet and Santos (1997) list the following

three: (1) Students are on campus for classes only before or after taking care of family

obligations or jobs; (2) most community colleges do not have residence halls, eliminating the

opportunity for students to share in extended living/learning situation; and (3) most students

take only a few courses before leaving for work or transferring to a university.

These same authors suggest that an institution must have a strong sense of internal

community before it can build viable external links. This internal sense of self involves ensuring

that the vision/mission of the college clearly supports community building, that the support is understood and shared by the entire campus, that students and employees feel welcome to contribute, and, perhaps most importantly, that the institutional leaders are authentically building their own communities Mittelstet & Santos, 1997).

This outreach can be accomplished using various scenarios. The major ones are service learning, partnerships and public service. The lines between service learning, partnerships and public service are often blurred. However, for the purposes of this chapter, service learning will be limited to those activities that are part of a formal classroom curriculum, partnerships confined to those activities that are conducted between at least two entities to solve a specific problem, and public service restricted to those activities that are traditionally thought of as "volunteer."

Service Learning

The roots of the current service learning movement extend deep into the fabric of American education. During the first decades of the twentieth century, John Dewey envisioned the need for direct personal experience as a tool of learning (Serow and others, 1996). Kezar (1998) states that the experiential education movement of the 1970's provided background for today's service learning projects along with the perception that there was a lack of relevance between college curriculums and public life or societal needs. Alexander Astin (2000) notes that "A major problem with contemporary civic life in America is that too few of our citizens are actively engaged in efforts to effect positive social change" (p.2).

In her 1998 keynote address to the Conference on Information Technology, Oblinger challenged institutions to incorporate 21st century skills into the fabric of the institution and transform the students and personnel by becoming a learning college. A learning college makes use of what is known about cognition in an effort to make learning more productive. As students become more engaged in the learning process, they retain more, moving from retaining ten percent of what they read to ninety-five percent of what they teach. They retain

seventy percent of what they discuss with others and eighty percent of personal experience (Oblinger, 1998).

Combining the need for improving civic life in America and the knowledge that students retain more from personal experience has lead organizations such as the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) to endorse service learning (Zlotkowski, 2001). In this context, service learning is seen as both encouraging learning and a method of stimulating the conscience (Serow, and other, 1996). The Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform (ASLER) defines service learning as "a method by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully-organized service experiences" (2000).

The 1991 National Society for Experiential Education report, "Research Agenda for combining Service and Learning in the 1990's" (Quoted in Gray, Ondaatje, Fricker and Geschwind, 2000) states that:

> One of the characteristics of service learning that distinguishes it from volunteerism is its balance between the act of community service by participants and reflection on that act, in order both to provide better service and to enhance the participant's own learning. Service learning therefore combines a strong social purpose with acknowledgment of the significance of personal and intellectual growth in participants.

Current Level of Incorporation into Institutions

The Campus Compact (2000) has developed a three-tier pyramid illustrating the level of commitment to service learning on an individual campus. The first tier is the introductory level, which includes those campuses where service learning is known and practiced by a few individuals, but it is not addressed institutionally. The second tier is the intermediate level, which is defined as those campuses that think of service learning as a mainstream activity. The final tier is the advanced level that includes those campuses that see service learning as one of

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a multitude of strategies to promote engagement with their community. This pyramid is the basis of a major grant initiative which included both faculty and member surveys.

The median number of service learning courses offered in 1999 on Campus Compact member campuses was 19, with 75 percent of the campuses reporting at least one course. The top three disciplines were education, psychology and sociology. Fifty-seven percent of the campuses had a service learning center. Faculty support was offered in a variety of ways. Fifty-eight percent of the campuses make curriculum models and syllabi available, offer faculty workshops, or provide materials to assist faculty with reflection and assessment activities. Faculty listed promoting active/engaged learning, developing civic skills/ responsibilities, and addressing campus responsibility to community as the top three goals and benefits of service learning. They also said the greatest obstacle to institutionalization or advancement of service learning was the time and pressures on faculty teaching load (Campus Compact, 2000).

The promise of service learning is that it will address a number of perceived educational and social problems. Among these are the need to increase a student's understanding of course content, boost critical-thinking skills and improve the integration of theory and practice. It also seems well suited to prepare youth to meet the responsibilities of living in a democratic society (Gray, and others, 2000).

Evaluation

The Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform has developed the following list of components necessary for a good educationally-based service learning project (Singh, 1999). They are preparation, collaboration, service, curriculum integration, reflection, celebration, evaluation, and professional development.

Similarly, Honnet and Poulsen (1989) have developed a list of ten principles of good practice for service learning projects, stating that an effective program:

1. Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.

2. Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.

3. Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.

4. Allows for those with needs to define those needs.

5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.

6. Matches service provides and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.

7. Expects genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment.

8. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.

9. Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.

10. Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

Much of the follow-up work conducted on service learning projects prior to the middle 1990's focused on program evaluation rather than outcomes assessment (Hesser, 1995). Part of the problem, according to Hesser, was determining exactly what outcomes should be assessed since there are at least three major stakeholders in a typical service learning project: faculty, students, and community. Gray and others (2000) suggest that the appropriate outcomes to be considered for these stakeholders fall under one of two issues: First, is there evidence that service learning has produced a positive effect on student development and learning? Without this, there is little incentive for faculty to incorporate service into curricula. Second, is the program providing benefits to communities and community agencies that exceed the costs of participation? If the problems associated with coordinating students' work in the community outweigh the benefits, there is little incentive for community agencies to continue in the programs.

In an effort to determine the impact of service learning activities on faculty, students and the community, both Hesser (1995) and Gray (2000) conducted nation-wide evaluations of service learning programs. Hesser's methodology included a survey sent to selected individuals and focus groups. Gray was the primary author of the RAND Corporation's evaluation of Learn and Serve America, Higher Education, a component of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The faculty responses to the Hesser survey indicated strong support for the hypothesis that "both liberal arts learning and disciplinary learning derives from field study and service learning" (p.40). Seventy-six percent of the respondents felt "very extensively" or "extensively" that service learning enabled the students in their course to "understand the key concepts and ideas of the course." Eighty-three percent felt that the quality of learning with the community service option compared "much better" or "better" to what the students were learning previously.

Model Programs. Information on the model programs discussed in this chapter has been obtained directly from the program coordinators, rather than traditional published sources. This was done in an effort to highlight those programs that are currently setting the standards for this area.

LASERs (Learning and Service, Education, Reflection): Setting the Standard for Service Learning. Creating a student service corps at Gadsden State Community College (GSCC), Gadsden, Alabama, was the brainchild of Victor Ficker, president of the college. By 1995 tuition costs had risen to the point where many students were "falling through the cracks" in financial aid programs. An appeal to industrial and business leaders in the area resulted in pledges for the creation of a special scholarship fund for eligible students.

The idea was to prevent working students from having to choose whether or not they could afford college. In the fall of 1995, 20 young men and women were able to enroll at Gadsden State tuition free! These students were committed to providing 75 hours of community service each semester they maintained a LASER scholarship. During the next 2 years

approximately 35 GSCC students contributed over 5,000 hours of community service, working with agencies such as United Way, Department of Human Resources, Red Cross, Chamber of Commerce, Rosehaven (shelter for abused women), Thirteenth Place (a "safe" home for abused teens), and others.

During the fall of 1997, the college applied for and received a grant from the National Corporation for Service through the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). This initiative, Broadening Horizons Through Service Learning, provided Gadsden State with the funds to implement a service learning program. In the broadest sense, educating students to recognize community needs while attempting to meet them through volunteer service was yet another avenue by which Gadsden State could fulfill its mission as a community college. A for-credit course, Community Awareness Through Service Learning, was designed specifically to educate students about both the theory and practice of service learning, as part of their academic training. Since the LASER student service corps had, in essence, been engaged in service learning activities, they were some of the first students enrolled in the one-hour credit course. The course provided immediate involvement for students interested in discovering and exploring social, economic, and educational issues in their own community. More importantly, the course engaged them in efforts to alleviate some of the problems they discovered in their midst by becoming service learning volunteers.

With the advent of AACC's Broadening Horizons grant, LASER took on a whole new meaning: Learning And Service, Education, Reflection, each of these being an important component of any service learning program. Because the members of the student service corps promised a long-term commitment to their agencies, most were able to gain invaluable knowledge and practical "hands-on" experience working with a trained staff of professionals over a period of nine months. As is the case with many service learners, a few of these LASERs were offered jobs by their agencies. Some walked away with excellent references that proved

beneficial when applying for other scholarships or when seeking admission into 4-year institutions.

The LASER program has evolved from an eager group of students willing to volunteer at community agencies into a cohesive group of young men and women serving with agencies that can utilize their specific academic and technical skills, thus providing these students with practical knowledge and training in their respective major fields of study. Each year's new group of LASERs sets a standard of service excellence that the college's service learning students can emulate. Together, the LASER student service corps and the service learning program have furthered strengthened GSCC's community partnerships and paved the way for new and even farther-reaching community involvement. Future commitments include providing student tutors for Neighborhood Network, part of a HUD grant for historically black schools. Service Learning provides a means to enhance the academic integrity of the courses students enroll in by emphasizing the importance of learning while serving. Students are engaged in more than just reading from a book or discussing "pretend" situations in an artificial classroom environment. They are living and working in the "real" world through their service learning experience. (Odom, 2000)

The Student Leaders (SL) program, Southwestern College (SWC). Southwestern College fosters student ownership of and leadership in service. In the summer, students are invited to take a Student Leadership Through Service course that prepares them to take on leadership roles in the Fall and Spring Semester. During the 2000-2001 academic year, 15 students participated in the program. Student Leaders planned and implemented a variety of activities that fostered a sense of civic participation in other students and the overall SWC community. Examples of Student Leader activities included:

- Beach clean-ups, open to SWC students and their families.
- A holiday toy and dinner drive for 95 needy children and their families in Tijuana, Mexico.

- The creation of a promotional video for SL.

- A fundraiser event that resulted in awarding 2 SL students with a $415 service scholarship each.

- "ServiceFest," a recognition event for all student volunteers, SL faculty and supporters. (Cornejo-Darcy, 2000)

Johnson County Community College's Las Pinats Service Learning Program, Overland Park, Kansas. Service-learning was introduced at Johnson County Community College (JSCC) in the fall 1993 semester. Since then, participants have included approximately 3,000 students, 50 faculty, and 150 community agencies, organizations, schools and care facilities throughout the metropolitan Kansas City area. They are proud of the efforts of all participants--students, instructors and agencies alike, who have contributed to the success of the program by offering and connecting the many opportunities for academic and community learning.

The project that best exemplifies the goals, methods, and outcomes of service learning is the international service-learning project in Las Pintas, Mexico. Following an initial trip in 1998, three additional teams of 15-20 JCCC students and faculty have returned to Las Pintas, an impoverished community near Guadalajara, Mexico, to help the people of Santa Rosa by offering health screenings, providing information and training, and assisting in building a community center. Other project goals were to immerse the students and staff in a meaningful service project and to enhance their service-learning experience with an international and intercultural component. *(After consulting with the program director it was decided that the specific program detailed above is not "curriculum-based", so that reference was removed.)*

This project models the essential principles of the JCCC Service-Learning Program-- academic integrity, meaningful service, reflection, diversity, reciprocity, responsibility and development and clearly demonstrates the variety of important collaborations which have been established to develop and support the project. These partnerships include those (1) between the college and the local community, which provided contributions of medical supplies, tools,

and children's shoes; (2) among academic disciplines, which offered pre-departure training, on-site guidance, and varied perspectives; (3) between students and instructors; and (4) between American volunteers and Mexican residents.

As one participant stated, "We and our Mexican partners formed a true 'learning community.' We collaborated, switched roles as the tasks demanded, took lessons from whom ever had the most information and skill, and participated in the work as equals. Sometimes we were teachers; often we were students" (Shideler, 2000, p.1).

JCCC is committed to the development of this partnership with Las Pintas and will continue to seek learning opportunities where the needs, goals and expertise of both the residents of Las Pintas and the students and faculty of JCCC coincide. As needs are identified and articulated by the leaders and residents of the community of Las Pintas, JCCC expects to collaborate in finding solutions by linking related academic programs willing to contribute faculty and student expertise and energy with the enthusiasm and generosity of the residents of Las Pintas (Shideler, 2000).

Partnerships

In these times of shrinking public funding and public support, institutions must think creatively in order to continue to provide the full range of services expected from a "community college." One "win-win" method is to develop partnerships with various entities to solve mutual problems. This type partnership can be developed for a short term boost to the community, such as building a house for Habitat for Humanity, or for long term on-going educational program, such as dual enrollment.

When developing partnerships, institutions need to avoid the tendency to equate "partner" with "funder" (Nielsen, 1994). Traditional fund-raising campaigns do not work well for community colleges (Catanzaro and Miller, 1994). Many partnerships do involve an exchange of funds, but care should be taken to ensure this is not the primary reason for the relationship unless both parties agree up front on the arrangement.

Strong partnerships are built upon the abilities and standing each side brings to the table. Nielsen (1994) says that the key to successful partnerships for a community college is to have a strong educational program. This builds credibility within the community and allows the institution to work more easily with other groups.

Community colleges partnerships usually fall into one of two broad categories. The first is where all the entities involved are educational institutions. This group often focuses on improving the movement or articulation among the various sectors. The second category focuses on relationships between education and industry. The main focus of this category is often providing selected workforce skills for a community.

The K-16 movement sometimes is seen as a combination of both categories since it is often a partnership between public schools, technical centers, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities to both improve movement among the difference sectors of education in the United States and produce a better prepared workforce.

McGrath (1998) provides the following characteristics of successful partnerships:

1. Collaboration begins in conversation - Partnership purposes must be clear and agreed upon at the outset. All parties should be treated equitably and decisions need to be made concerning who will be at the table.

2. Both process and structure matter - Mundane issues related to fiscal responsibilities, budgets, roles and governance need to be addressed early. The ability to cooperate on this type of background issue sets the stage for cooperating on more substantive issues later on.

3. Vision is important - "To embark on the hard work of educational reform, the partners must be able to envision a future that is more than simply the current educational system functioning slightly better" (McGrath, p 2).

4. Leadership - As with any successful project, leadership is critical. It can take many forms and be exercised at many levels. Often successful collaborations involve both "top-down" and "bottom-up" strategies. Projects between educational institutions and community

organizations often represent large numbers of individuals who need to know what is happening and have suggestions for improvements. At the same time, the leaders must remain committed so they can provide the support, resources and influence needed at critical times.

5. A learning community - Time must be provided for the participants to reflect on what is happening so the lessons learned can be share with others.

6. The pace of development - The development of partnerships is never a straight line, orderly progression.

Model Programs. The partnership programs presented below represent examples of the top quality programs currently in existence. They were also selected to display the variety of relationships that can be classified as partnerships.

In October 1995, the Community College of Denver (CCD) and Johnson Controls established a partnership by which Johnson Controls donated building systems control materials to CCD to incorporate into a new training facility. Johnson Controls uses the facility to do customer and employee training and as a sale demonstration center. CCD uses the equipment as part of the resources for courses in its environmental and refrigeration technologies program. By placing the program at a downtown site, it is accessible to residents of the inner city who traditionally have less access to high-technology, high-wage jobs (Cisneros, 1996).

Service industries can also benefit from this type of partnership. The Business and Technology Center of the Metropolitan Community College District (MCCD) of Kansas City promotes a program in Customer Service Representative Training that provides instruction in telephone skills, communication skills, personal computer skills, keyboarding, critical thinking, team-building and business etiquette. Instruction includes hands on practice with the latest call center technology and includes at least one week of "live" training (MCCD, 2000). The area has 21 customer service call centers and this program guarantees students jobs in one of them.

"The program has been funded by grants from several large companies, including AT&T, which provided the switching equipment." (Cisneros, 1996, p. 20)

The Rio Salado Community College Educational Partnership (Rio Salado Campus, Maricopa Community College, Arizona) works with businesses to create program that satisfy immediate training needs. One specialized program is with the Arizona Dental Association. Arizona was experiencing a shortage of dental hygienists. Rio Salado and the Arizona Dental Association collaborated on building an educational facility and program that provides students with state-of-the-art training. Students obtain an Associate in Applied Science degree and all graduates are qualified to become registered dental hygienists. Eventually the partnership will expand to include distance learning courses that can be used to educate dental hygienists in rural areas (Stuart,1999).

The Medical Center Campus of Miami-Dade Community College, Florida, is situated in the heart of the Dade County Medical Center. The Medical Center provides a wide array of Associate in Science degrees, continuing education classes, Certificates, and adult vocational training in eleven health related fields. The Division of Continuing and Community Education provide both regular and custom-designed offerings to meet any of the surrounding agencies specific educational and training needs. Classes can be held on-site or at the Medical Center Campus. Students benefit both from the academic content of the training and from becoming comfortable in their future work environment (Stuart, 1999).

While many partnerships are limited to one community college and one business, consortiums have also been developed that help an entire industry. The Alliance for Higher Education, Grand Prairie, Texas, (2000) is a consortium of colleges and universities, major corporations and two public library systems. The consortium broadcasts education and training directly to businesses via its Green Television Network, formerly known as the TAGER Television Network *(Note to editors as of 6/1/01 the web address used for this reference used the name TAGER. If the web site is updated before publication this might change.)* College-level

credit, non-credit and certification courses are available, including multiple engineering, computer science and business disciplines. Companies that want to bring higher education resources have established partnerships with several community colleges and universities to develop a distance learning approach to bring the latest technical training to members. The Consortium for Supplier Training (2000) is an industry wide group of leading quality-focused companies who have come together along with their partner Supplier Training Centers, to provide world-class total quality training to all businesses on an affordable and accessible ongoing basis. Once a business has contacted a Supplier Training Center, they decide what type training is needed and who is most able to supply it. Several community colleges including Dallas County Community College (Texas), Oakland Community College (Michigan), Northern Essex Community College (Massachusetts), and Mesa Community College (Arizona) are training centers.

Public Service

It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish "volunteer service" from "service learning." In the past, instructors did not usually ask students to make connections between their volunteer activities and their academic course work (Parsons, 1996). Now classroom volunteering has become much more closely liked with "service-learning," leaving volunteering for more generalized degree requirements or time outside the classroom.

Since a student's public service is outside the realm of the specific academics being concurrently undertaken, a logical question is whether there is any evidence that the task is beneficial to the student. Work by Astin and Sax, referenced in Astin, Sax and Avalos (1999) suggests that service participation is positively associated with several short-term cognitive and affective outcomes. These include students' making a commitment to their community, helping others in difficulty, promoting racial understanding, and influencing social values.

Astin (1999) also looked at the long term effects of volunteering. Based upon a nine year follow-up of the students entering college in 1985, he found that participating in volunteer

service during college is positively associated with attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one's alma mater, socializing with persons from different racial/ethnic groups, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college. It is also positively associated with five variables that Astin categorizes as being in the value realm: helping others in difficulty, participating in community action programs, participating in environmental cleanup programs, promoting a racial understanding, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life. He did not find support for the argument that volunteering "politicizes" students.

Community needs are often broad and institutions must focus in on one area. Colin Powell, in his Promise Letter Summer 1998, asked America, "What are colleges and universities throughout the country doing on behalf of youth?" (AACC, 2000, p.1). In 1998, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) became the first national higher education association to make a commitment to community service (AACC, 2000). AACC is encouraging all its member colleges to join America's Promise, a national organization that was created to mobilize people from every sector of American life to build the character and competence of our nation's youth. This mission is to be fulfilled by ensuring that young people have access to the following five fundamental resources that the organizers feel are necessary to become successful adults: 1. An ongoing relationship with a caring adult - parent, mentor, tutor or coach; 2. Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours; 3. A healthy start; 4. A marketable skill through effective education; and 5. An opportunity to give back through community service.

The AACC website (www.aacc.nche.edu) provided information on the following institutions and their America's Promise programs:

Calhoun Community College in Decatur, Alabama, as a College of Promise will provide young people access to all five resources. To fulfill this goal, Calhoun will provide the leadership for Decatur's Promise, the community partnership committed to providing 2,000

young people with all five fundamental resources by the year 2000; provide 600+ young people access to a caring adult, a safe place with structured activities in non-school hours and a marketable skill through the AmeriCorps and America Reads programs; and provide basic health screenings for 300+ Head Start students by the College's nursing and allied health students.

Lawson State Community College (LSCC) in Birmingham, Alabama, will provide access to the Five Fundamental Resources to the young people at Wenonah Elementary School, Jones Valley Middle School, and Wenonah High School. LSCC students and staff will provide resources to an estimated 2,000 children in Birmingham, through expansions in Breakfast Buddies, Upward Bound, Partners in Education, Shots for Tots, Job Training Partnerships, Habitat for Humanity and the National Youth Sports Programs.

Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois, provides the leadership of the Springfield Community of Promise, the community partnership committed to providing young people with all five fundamental resources. The Volunteer Center on campus also serves as the local contact point for the Community of Promise.

A Youth Summit coordinated by the mayor of Brockton, Massachusetts and Massachusetts Promise was held at Massasoit Community College, Brockton, Massachusetts. The President of Massasoit Community College, was actively engaged in the events of the day and was one of the opening speakers.

Seward County Community College in Liberal, Kansas, provides the leadership of the Liberal Community of Promise, the community partnership committed to providing young people with all five fundamental resources.

Yakima Valley Community College in Yakima, Washington, will provide young people access to effective education by doubling the number of mentoring and tutoring opportunities for local elementary school students through the Project Read program. YVCC also plans to

implement a "Read to Your Baby Program" to reach expecting parents and teach them about infant music and reading stimulation.

Beginning Fall 1999, Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida began a requirement of 30 hours of community service or a service-learning course for all Associate in Arts degree-seeking students (May, 2000).

Conclusions and Implications

All three forms of community connections discussed in this chapter - service learning, partnerships and public service - are ways of ensuring that students who attend a community college are aware of the wider world and of their role in it.

In an interview for *Newsweek* magazine, Dr. Richard J. Light discussed the important role extracurricular activities play in the success of college students. Dr. Light stated that students who find a way to connect their academic work to their personal lives are the happiest students on campus and tend to be the most successful in the classroom (Davis, 2001). Service learning is a more formalized method of ensuring that students have the opportunity to make those connections.

As the pace of change increases, the need for community colleges to reflect the current marketplace also increases. One of the best means of keeping up to date is to invite business to become a partner in producing the job skills needed for the future.

More conservative governmental leadership tends to place more emphasis on community services and support and less on governmental services and support. The current shift in thinking has provided a wide variety of opportunities for community college students and faculty to begin giving back to their communities even prior to graduation.

The need to provide students the means of connecting their studies with their lives, up-to-date job skills and an understanding of the importance of volunteering in their communities ensures that institutions will be engaged in these types of activities for years to come.

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